

do on your hand-held calculator at home in 30,000 years. We have to do that together.

But as we do these things, we change the whole nature of the future. The children in this audience will be doing jobs that have not been invented yet, many will be doing work that has not been imagined yet because of what we do together as well as what we do on our own.

So you have to decide that. You look around this room. Look at all this diversity in this room. Look how different we all are. Do you know how much of your time I spend as President, trying to get people around the world not to do destructive things because they can't live with even a limited amount of diversity, because they literally cannot exist, because they have to have a divisive vision of themselves and their lives, they've got to be thinking they're important because they're not someone else? That's what the deal in Bosnia is all about. That's what Northern Ireland's about. That's what the Middle East is about. That's what the slaughter between the Hutus and the Tutsis in Burundi and Rwanda was all about. All over the world.

That's what the church burnings are all about. When a synagogue is defaced or an Islamic center is burned, that's what it's all about. There are lots of folks that just can't get up in the morning and go through the day unless they've got somebody to look down on to make themselves feel bigger, a divisive view of the world.

Now, I am not being naive here. I don't pretend for a moment that there aren't tough decisions that have to be made, that there are lots of moments when there is no 100 percent perfect answer. But I'm telling you, where you go in life depends not only on all the details in dealing with the tough decisions, it depends on what your view is, how you look at this. And that's why I tell you, if you look at how the world is changing, going from the cold war to a global economy, if you look at the new security threats of the 21st century, terrorism, ethnic strife, the proliferation of dangerous weapons, organized crime and drug smuggling, they all cross national boundaries. We have to be unified in dealing with that. I asked the Vice President to head that commission to figure out how we could make our airports and our airlines

safer. We're dealing with a problem that every country has to deal with, so we have to work together on that.

If you look at the way the economy's going and the competition that we're in with people all around the world, we have to hold ourselves to international standards and then we have to work together to make sure we all do it.

If you think about all of us in this room, most of us would do well if there were no Government efforts of any kind. We would do okay. But we're doing a lot better because everybody else has a chance to make the most of their lives as well.

So I say to you, you're going to have 6 weeks and 4 days of television wars here in Oregon, and half of what's on there may be irrelevant. But this is a big deal. This is a huge deal. This is the last major election of the 20th century and the first election of the 21st century. Things have changed. We have to change. And America is going to go into that next century with either the unifying vision dominant or the divisive vision dominant.

That's what I want you to think about, not Democrats or Republicans or any of that. I want you to think about your country. And if you look at the life and career and work of this man, it would be hard to think of someone who could be a better poster boy for a unifying vision of America's future in the 21st century than Tom Bruggere.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Bruggere, Democratic candidate for Senate, his wife, Kelley, and their children Maria and T.C.; Mayor Vera Katz of Portland; and actor Christopher Reeve. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Same-Gender Marriage

September 20, 1996

Throughout my life I have strenuously opposed discrimination of any kind, including discrimination against gay and lesbian Americans. I am signing into law H.R. 3396, a bill

relating to same-gender marriage, but it is important to note what this legislation does and does not do.

I have long opposed governmental recognition of same-gender marriages and this legislation is consistent with that position. The act confirms the right of each State to determine its own policy with respect to same-gender marriage and clarifies for purposes of Federal law the operative meaning of the terms “marriage” and “spouse.”

This legislation does not reach beyond those two provisions. It has no effect on any current Federal, State, or local anti-discrimination law and does not constrain the right of Congress or any State or locality to enact anti-discrimination laws. I therefore would take this opportunity to urge Congress to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, an act which would extend employment discrimination protections to gays and lesbians in the workplace. This year the Senate considered this legislation contemporaneously with the act I sign today and failed to pass it by a single vote. I hope that in its next session Congress will pass it expeditiously.

I also want to make clear to all that the enactment of this legislation should not, despite the fierce and at times divisive rhetoric surrounding it, be understood to provide an excuse for discrimination, violence, or intimidation against any person on the basis of sexual orientation. Discrimination, violence, and intimidation for that reason, as well as others, violate the principle of equal protection under the law and have no place in American society.

NOTE: H.R. 3396, approved September 21, was assigned Public Law No. 104–199. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 6921—National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, 1996

September 20, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Since the Reconstruction period, when 24 private black colleges were founded within 10 years, our Nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have played a central role in providing access to higher education for many Americans. Growing steadily after this early burst, HBCUs fought a hard struggle for survival over many decades, ultimately proving themselves to be not only factories of learning, but also bastions of the core American ideals of freedom, diversity, and enterprise.

Today, more than 100 HBCUs throughout our country serve a unique role in educating African Americans. Although as a group they make up only 3 percent of American institutions of higher learning, they award one-third of all bachelor’s degrees—and a major proportion of the graduate degrees—earned by African Americans each year. Their alumni rolls include scores of leaders in fields ranging from law to the sciences, and from the arts to medicine. Often working with limited resources, these institutions have earned a reputation for achieving “the most with the least” public dollars—consistently keeping tuition costs affordable, for example, or accepting higher numbers of students who need special educational or financial assistance.

Our Historically Black Colleges and Universities are an enduring beacon of hope offering thousands of our citizens a critical opportunity to achieve their full potential. HBCUs give these students not only access to a quality education, but also a supportive environment in which to learn and positive role models whose lives they can strive to emulate. In addition, these institutions con-